

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A computer graphical user interface that provides access to
2 information pertaining to a patent application, said graphical user interface comprising:
3 a first display section in which is displayed a plurality of first file links
4 selectable by said user, each of said first file links providing access to a patent
5 document that was filed in or sent from a patent office and that is stored on a computer-
6 readable medium in an image file format; and
7 a second display section in which is displayed a plurality of second file
8 links selectable by said user, each of said second file links providing access to a patent
9 file that is associated with an application program and stored on a computer-readable
10 medium;
11 wherein said patent documents and said patent files accessible from said
12 first and second display sections all pertain to said patent application.

1 2. The graphical user interface of claim 1 wherein each of said
2 patent files is stored on said compute-readable medium in a format native to said
3 associated application program or convertible to said native format by said associated
4 application program.

1 3. The graphical user interface of claim 1 wherein at least one of
2 said patent files accessible through said plurality of second file links corresponds to a
3 patent document accessible through said plurality of first file links.

1 4. The graphical user interface of claim 1 further comprising a third
2 display section in which is displayed a plurality of third file links selectable by a user of
3 the user interface, each of said third file links providing access to correspondence
4 generated from one or more of an inventor client system, an in-house client system or
5 an outside representative client system, wherein said correspondence is stored on a
6 computer-readable medium and pertains to said patent application.

1 5. The graphical user interface of claim 4 wherein said first, second
2 and third plurality of file links are either html hypertext links or folders.

1 6. The graphical user interface of claim 5 wherein each of said first,
2 second and third sections are a panel on a Web page.

1 7. The graphical user interface of claim 4 wherein each of said first,
2 second and third sections are a panel of a window in a Windows™-based environment.

1 8. The graphical user interface of claim 4 wherein said first, second
2 and third display sections are displayed adjacent to each other across a width of a
3 display.

1 9. The graphical user interface of claim 1 wherein said second
2 display section also includes a plurality of fourth file links wherein each of said fourth
3 file links provides access to a document that is a prior art reference to said patent
4 application.

1 10. The graphical user interface of claim 1 wherein said first and
2 second display sections are separate windows.

1 11. The graphical user interface of claim 1 wherein said first and
2 second display sections are panels of a single window.

1 12. The graphical user interface of claim 1 wherein said patent
2 documents are locked and not available to be edited.

1 13. A method of providing access to information pertaining to a
2 patent application, said method comprising:
3 storing said information on a computer-readable medium, wherein said
4 information includes at least (i) correspondence generated from one or more of an
5 inventor client system, an in-house client system and an outside representative client
6 system; (ii) patent documents filed in or sent from a patent office; and (iii) patent files
7 associated with said patent application, wherein at least some of said patent documents
8 are stored in an image file format and at least some of said patent files are associated
9 with an application program;

10 accessing said computer-readable medium with a computer processor
11 and using said computer processor to generate on a display at least first, second and
12 third separate sections wherein in said first section is displayed a list of said
13 correspondence, in said second section is displayed a list of said patent documents and
14 in said third section is displayed a list of said patent files.

1 14. The method of claim 12 wherein at least some file are stored in a
2 format native to said associated application program.

1 15. The method of claim 13 wherein said computer generates a
2 fourth separate section, said fourth section including summary information related to
3 said patent application including at least said application title and a file number.

1 16. The method of claim 15 wherein said fourth section further
2 comprises an information icon that, when selected, causes additional summary
3 information related to said patent application to be displayed.

1 17. The method of claim 13 wherein each of said first, second and
2 third display sections comprises a plurality of rows with each row containing a file link
3 selectable by a user to allow said user to view one or more of said correspondence, said
4 patent documents or said patent files.

1 18. The method of claim 17 wherein each of said file links is either a
2 hypertext link or a folder or package that contains other folders and/or hypertext links.

1 19. The method of claim 13 wherein said patent documents are
2 locked and not available to be edited.

1 20. A computer-implemented method of providing access to
2 information pertaining to a patent application, said method comprising:
3 storing said information on a computer-readable medium accessible to a
4 server system, wherein said information includes at least (i) correspondence generated
5 from one or more of an inventor client system, an in-house client system and an outside
6 representative client system; (ii) patent documents filed in or sent from a patent office;
7 and (iii) patent files associated with said patent application, wherein at least some of
8 said patent documents are stored in an image file format and at least some of said patent
9 files are associated with an application program;

10 generating a web page from said server system, said web page including
11 at least first, second and third separate sections wherein said first section comprises file
12 links to said correspondence, said second section comprises file links to said patent
13 documents and said third section comprises file links to said patent files; and

14 viewing said web page from a client system.

1 21. The computer-implemented method of claim 20 wherein said at
2 least some patent files are stored in a format native to said associated application
3 program.

1 22. The method of claim 20 wherein said patent documents are
2 locked and thereby not available to be edited by client systems.

1 23. The method of claim 20 wherein said patent documents are
2 stored in a bit-mapped format.

1 24. The method of claim 23 wherein said patent documents stored in
2 bit-mapped format include documents scanned from a paper document and documents
3 generated from said patent files.

1 25. The method of claim 20 wherein said web page further includes
2 a information icon, which when selected by said client system, causes a case
3 information web page to be generated by said server system and displayed on said
4 client system, said case information web page displaying at least a filing date and
5 application number associated with said patent application.

1 26. The method of claim 25 wherein said case information web page
2 further includes links to additional information associated with said patent application,
3 including priority information, power of attorney information, assignment information
4 and comments.

1 27. The method of claim 20 wherein said first, second and third
2 sections are positioned side-by-side horizontally across said display.

1 28. The method of claim 20 wherein said first and third sections each
2 comprise a create icon that when selected by a client system creates a document to be
3 stored in that section, wherein at least some information in said document is populated
4 with information that was previously associated with said patent application and stored
5 in a database.

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1 29. The method of claim 20 wherein each of said file links is either a
2 hypertext link or a folder that contains other folders and/or hypertext links.

1 30. The method of claim 20 wherein said first and third sections each
2 comprise an upload icon that when selected by a client system allows an electronic
3 document to be associated with the patent application.

1 31. The method of claim 20 wherein at least one of said patent files
2 corresponds to one of said patent documents.

1 32. A server system for managing information related to patent
2 applications, said server system comprising:

3 (a) a processor;

4 (b) a database; and

5 (c) a memory for storing a computer program;

6 wherein said processor is operative with said computer program to:

7 store, in said database, information including at least (i) correspondence
8 generated from one or more of an inventor client system, an in-house client system and
9 an outside representative client system; (ii) patent documents filed in or sent from a
10 patent office; and (iii) patent files associated with said patent application, wherein at
11 least some of said patent documents are stored in an image file format and at least some
12 of said patent files are associated with an application program; and

13 generate a graphical user interface that can be displayed on a display to
14 provide access to said information, said graphical user interface including at least first,
15 second and third separate sections wherein said first section comprises a list of said
16 correspondence, said second section comprises a list of said patent documents and said
17 third section comprises a list of said patent files.

1 33. A networked system comprising:

2 (a) a communication network;

3 (b) a client system coupled to the communication network, said
4 client system comprising a processor and a display;

5 (c) a server system coupled to the communication network, said
6 server system comprising a processor, a database, and a memory for storing a computer
7 program;

8 wherein said processor is operative with said computer program to:
9 store, in said database, information including at least (i) correspondence
10 generated from one or more of an inventor client system, an in-house client system and
11 an outside representative client system; (ii) patent documents filed in or sent from a
12 patent office; and (iii) patent files associated with said patent application, wherein at
13 least some of said patent documents are stored in an image file format and at least some
14 of said patent files are associated with an application program; and
15 generate a graphical user interface that can be displayed on said client
16 system display to provide access to said information, said graphical user interface
17 including at least first, second and third separate sections wherein said first section
18 comprises a list of said correspondence, said second section comprises a list of said
19 patent documents and said third section comprises a list of said patent files.

1 34. The networked system of claim 33 wherein said communication
2 network is the Internet.